



# Hoosier



# Headlines

A Bimonthly  
Indiana NRCS Newsletter

July/August 2012

Issue 40

## In This Issue

- Heart to Heart with Hardisty
- Message from our Acting State Conservationist
- Employee Spotlight  
*Tiffany Davidson*  
*Executive Asst.—State*
- Hoosier Happenings  
*Employee Kudos*  
*New GLRI & MRBI Exhibits*  
*Spencer Co. Celebrates...*  
*Indiana Drought Webpage*  
*GLBT Festivals*  
*Earth Team Reminder*  
*Top 5 ETV Groups*  
*Top 5 ETV Individuals*
- Partners' Web Links
- Personnel Update
- Featured Website  
*USDA Drought Assistance*
- Mark Your Calendar

## Heart to Heart ... with Hardisty



I don't know that I have ever seen our agency's mission in action more than it has over the last month. To see and hear how you all have truly been "Helping People Help the Land" during the critical stages of the 2012 drought has been inspiring. I could not be more proud of how the NRCS leadership has made it a priority to "stretch" our programs to fit many needs and also bring additional dollars into Indiana so we had something to offer landowners as they were making tough decisions about their crops, their livestock and their land.



While we now all understand the benefits of soil health, the drought and stress from continuous heat has deepened the desire for many of our landowners to consider their impact on our soil and water resources, short-term and long-term. Harvest is beginning and yields could be at a record low, but we know the rains will return and things will green up. More importantly, NRCS will be there to encourage farmers to keep things growing and land covered throughout the year to build that good organic matter to enhance productivity and sustainability.



As I make my trip into Washington DC for a 120 day detail, I have many positive stories to share about our Indiana landowners, their desire for healthy soil and plans for next year's crop. However, my best stories will be about Indiana's employees standing ready to address our customers' needs and going above and beyond to help our Hoosier farmers in a time of crisis—those will be the most enjoyable to share.



I know I am leaving Indiana NRCS in good hands with Kimberly Neumann as your Acting State Conservationist, along with the rest of the Indiana's NRCS strong Leadership Team. I look forward to hearing even more exceptional stories about all the good work you all are doing when I return in a few months. Until then, I wish you all well and see you soon.

*Jane E. Hardisty*

---

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR ACTING STATE CONSERVATIONIST—KIMBERLY NEUMANN



What a Summer! It is hard to believe it is ending and Fall is approaching quickly. With the end of fiscal year 2012 and all the hectic, last minute preparations that come with it under normal circumstances, we are also dealing with additional drought funding to help farmers get through the next weather cycle. I know that these past few months have been very stressful for our landowners and NRCS staff at all levels of the organization.

As the state office worked to get information out on drought funding and policies as fast as possible, there were instances where corrections needed to be made to posted documents which resulted in several emails on similar topics. I know this caused frustration at all levels, and thank you all for your patience and focus on helping landowners. Through it all, we

have kept the focus on the NRCS website drought page ([www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/drought.html](http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/drought.html)). It should be considered the most current and accurate source of information. The website is available to the general public and our partners. I urge you to check the site often and to refer others to it.

As Acting State Conservationist, my goal is to provide the leadership needed to close out this fiscal year and to start the new year as strong as possible. We have many uncertainties in our near future including a national election, the status of the Farm Bill and budget, and weather impacts on conservation practice implementation. Working together is how we have gotten through tough times in the past and working together will get us through the next year and the years beyond 2013. Our work in helping people help the land is gaining NRCS national recognition and trust. NRCS actions during the drought have solidified our reputation as the agency that gets work done. These actions depend on all levels of our organization working together, and our strength as an agency lies in our ability to focus our resources to improve conservation issues wherever they may be.

---

### \*\*\* Employee Spotlight \*\*\*

#### Tiffany Davidson, Executive Assistant—NRCS State Office



**Q: As the new Executive Assistant, please help us get to know you better. Are you a Hoosier native?**

At heart, yes! I was born in central California and relocated to Michigan/Indiana as a youth. I have been away from the Midwest since 1999 and consider myself “finally returning home.” When people ask me where I am from I almost always point to

my lower palm (the Michigan mitten!).

**Q: Before coming NRCS, what did you do?**

I transferred from the Department of the Navy as an Executive Assistant to the base Commanding Officer at Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach. Prior to that I was active duty Navy, serving on a squadron, a ship, and a staff command. My entire nine years of federal service is with the Navy.

**Q: How did your past work experience prepare you for your current position with NRCS?**

Some might say that working on an aircraft crash landing firefighting team with military grade equipment 2,000 nautical miles away from land could prepare one for anything...but the

truth is – nothing can prepare you for the demands of the State Conservationist.

**Q: What are you looking forward to most in your new position?**

Often times agencies can seem to operate in a vacuum. Exposure to other departments/agencies can offer a world of insight to federal operations and programs. I’ve already learned so much about the government just by sitting in a different seat. I hope to increase that knowledge...oh, and learn how to quit killing my plants – if anyone can help me I sure hope it’s NRCS!

**Q: Lastly, do you have any hobbies or special interests that you can tell us about?**

I have three young children so the bulk of my time is literally stolen from me by hungry midgets. Each of the kids plays sports and I coach if I can; that being said I also spend a lot of time trying to figure out how to get that smell out of a football helmet. My hobby, the one that I own, that midgets can’t touch and my husband doesn’t care for – is reading. I love to read, and to write when I have time. I am the nerd reading pages at red lights because I can’t wait to see what happens next.

## Hoosier Happenings

### KUDOS to...

Kudos to NRCS District Conservationist **Mark DePoy**, District Conservationist in Switzerland County for setting up an excellent farm tour on August 8<sup>th</sup> for Under Secretary Harris Sherman and other partners as part of the Ohio River Water Quality Trading Program project. - **Jane Hardisty**, Indiana State Conservationist

Kudos to the **Hendricks County Conservation Team** and Lebanon Tech Team Civil Engineering Technician **Anne Burget** for participating in the Feds Feed Families Programs. The team dropped off 61 pounds of food to the Shared Blessings food bank. In addition, Anne Burget brought in approximately 40 pounds of fresh produce from her garden! - **Jerod Chew**, **Hendricks/ Marion County District Conservationist**

### NEW GLRI AND MRBI EXHIBITS AVAILABLE

New exhibits are available featuring the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and the Mississippi River Basin Initiative. These exhibits would be great additions to county fairs or local field days and workshops.

The NRCS Distribution Center has a variety of national exhibits for use at trade shows, fairs, educational programs, etc. The NRCS Distribution Center covers all shipping charges including pre-paid return labels. Contact [NRCS Distribution Center SharePoint site](#) to schedule an exhibit for your next event exhibit.



### SPENCER COUNTY CELEBRATES 150 YEARS

The Rockport Service Center in Spencer County celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the USDA with a picnic. They invited the families of employees to join them to the site where Abraham Lincoln lived from the age of seven through 21, Lincoln City, Indiana, at the US Department of Interior's Lincoln Boyhood Memorial. The group is standing in front of a split rail fence similar to the kind ole Abe would have made to keep the woodland critters away.



### NEW DROUGHT WEBSITE AND PUBLICATIONS

Indiana NRCS recently developed a drought webpage and series of drought factsheets aimed at providing technical assistance to landowners throughout Indiana. These tools are designed to help Indiana landowners make good land management decisions during this severe weather condition and to compile the most current resources on drought.

The drought website offers visitors important, up-to-date information about the 2012 drought. Information on this site includes a summary of conservation concerns, drought factsheets and publications, drought press releases, and drought web resources. The series of factsheets focuses on nine topics including cover crops, no-till, pasture and grazing, engineering practices, wildlife, warm season grasses and Farm Bill Program flexibility. Visit the website at: [www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/drought.html](http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/drought.html).



## **\*\* SPECIAL EMPHASIS \*\***

### ***Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Festivals***



For the first time, NRCS set up recruiting information booths at two local lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) festivals here in Indiana.

On July 28<sup>th</sup>, Tandy Easler, LGBT Special Emphasis Program Manager, and Scot Haley, Resource Soil Scientist, worked the Fort Wayne LGBT Pride Festival from noon to 7 pm at Headwater's Park in Fort Wayne. In addition, on August 18<sup>th</sup>, Mark Eastman, District Conservationist, Lindsay Martinez, Hispanic Program Manager, Rafael Vega, District Conservationist, Curtis Knueven, Resource Management Specialist, and Al Tinsley, Wetland Specialist worked the Lafayette OUTfest from 4 pm to 10 pm.

Approximately 75 to 100 people came through each booth inquiring about NRCS, our Earth Team and federal employment. There was information available about Earth Team opportunities, the usajobs.com website, careers in natural resources, educational requirements, same-sex partner benefits with federal employment, and the history of LGBT inclusion in the USDA. There were lots of people excited to see NRCS present at these events and many sincere interests in future employment with NRCS. The staff enjoyed talking with such a diverse, crowd of people while listening to good music and tasting delicious food.



### **Partnership Links**

**IN Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Bi-Weekly**

Updates: [www.iaswcd.org/whatsnew/index.html](http://www.iaswcd.org/whatsnew/index.html)

**IN Conservation Partnership:** [www.iaswcd.org/icp/index.html](http://www.iaswcd.org/icp/index.html)

**IN Dept. of Environmental Management:** [www.in.gov/idem](http://www.in.gov/idem)

**IN Dept. of Natural Resources:** [www.in.gov/dnr](http://www.in.gov/dnr)

**IN State Dept. of Agriculture, Division of Soil Conservation:**

<http://www.in.gov/isda/soil/>

**Purdue University:** [www.purdue.edu](http://www.purdue.edu)

**USDA Farm Service Agency:** [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

## **Hoosier Happenings (cont.)**

### **REMINDER: TURN IN EARTH TEAM HOURS!!**

The job of conserving our natural resources cannot be done by one agency alone. Often times, we rely on volunteers help in reducing soil erosion, conserving our water and improving its quality, and developing pride in our country's natural resource heritage. For this reason, the Natural Resources Conservation Service developed the Earth Team Volunteer program.

As the fiscal year starts to come to a close, please keep in mind **Earth Team Volunteer hours need to be submitted by Friday, September 21<sup>st</sup>**. You may send your hours to your Area Coordinator or your State Coordinator.

#### **State Coordinator**

Kris Vance ([kris.vance@in.usda.gov](mailto:kris.vance@in.usda.gov))

#### **Area Coordinators**

Northeast—Randy Dickson ([randy.dickson@in.usda.gov](mailto:randy.dickson@in.usda.gov))

Northwest—Amanda Kautz ([amanda.kautz@in.usda.gov](mailto:amanda.kautz@in.usda.gov))

Southeast—Seth Harden ([seth.harden@in.usda.gov](mailto:seth.harden@in.usda.gov))

Southwest—Matt Jarvis ([matt.jarvis@in.usda.gov](mailto:matt.jarvis@in.usda.gov))

### **TOP FIVE EARTH TEAM VOLUNTEERS—GROUPS**

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| 1. Craddock Wetlands Nature Preserve       | 3027.5 hrs |
| <b>Muncie Service Center</b>               |            |
| 2. Motivate Our Minds Group                | 1096 hrs   |
| <b>Muncie Service Center</b>               |            |
| 3. Prairie Creek Trail and Nature Preserve | 813 hrs    |
| <b>Muncie Service Center</b>               |            |
| 4. Hardy Lake Conservation Day             | 800 hrs    |
| <b>Scottsburg Service Center</b>           |            |
| 5. Whitewater Canal Trail Group            | 518 hrs    |
| <b>Brookville Service Center</b>           |            |

### **TOP FIVE EARTH TEAM VOLUNTEERS—INDIVIDUALS**

- |                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| 1. James Schwanke                 | 112 hrs  |
| <b>Knox Service Center</b>        |          |
| 2. Matthew Oliver                 | 87 hrs   |
| <b>Anderson Service Center</b>    |          |
| 3. Henry Wallis                   | 82 hrs   |
| <b>Danville Service Center</b>    |          |
| 4. Joe O'Donnell                  | 72.5 hrs |
| <b>Delphi Service Center</b>      |          |
| 5. Susan Grivas                   | 44 hrs   |
| <b>Greencastle Service Center</b> |          |

## Personnel Update

### REASSIGNMENTS

Lynette Harmon, District Conservationist at the Goshen transferring to NRCS Norwalk, OH effective 9-9-12.  
James Underkoffler, Contract Specialist on Admin Staff transferred to DCMA effective 7-15-12.

### SELECTIONS FROM VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cynthia Johnston selected for the Soil Conservationist position at the Lebanon CIT effective 7-29-12  
Shannon Pierce selected for the Human Resources Manager position on the Admin Staff effective 8-12-12  
Victor Shelton selected for the State Agronomist position on the Technology Staff effective 8-26-12  
Gary Streuben selected for the State Soil Scientist position on the Soils Staff effective 10-7-12

### RETIREMENTS

Richard Neff, District Conservationist at the Angola Field Office effective 7-3-12.  
Byron Nagle, Resource Soil Scientist at the North Vernon Area Office effective 9-30-12

## USDA DROUGHT AND DROUGHT ASSISTANCE WEBPAGE

This website provides resources and information related to the current drought crisis from across the Government. Throughout much of the country, communities are struggling with one of the worst droughts to strike the U.S. in decades. The lack of rain and high temperatures have done considerable damage to crops -- particularly those in the Midwest. USDA and other federal agencies are taking steps to help farmers, ranchers, and small businesses wrestling with this crisis.

Visit the USDA's Drought and Drought Assistance webpage at:

[http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=DISASTER\\_ASSISTANCE&parentnav=DISASTER\\_SAFETY](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=DISASTER_ASSISTANCE&parentnav=DISASTER_SAFETY)

## Mark Your Calendar

### SEPTEMBER

- 11: Indiana State Technical Committee Meeting  
Northeast Area Meeting  
SAC/FAC Meeting
- 12: Southeast Area Meeting—**CANCELLED**  
Indiana Conservation Partnership Webinar
- 13: Advanced Cover Crop Training—Train the Trainer
- 14: Soil Scientist Meeting  
Ohio Soil Health Tour
- 18: Area Conservationist Meeting
- 19: Leadership Team Meeting
- 25: Northwest Area Meeting
- 26: Southwest Area Meeting

### OCTOBER

- 2: Diversity Day
- 8: Columbus Day—Offices Closed
- 9: SAC/FAC Meeting
- 15: Southeast Trailer and Towing Safety Training
- 23: NE and NW Trailer and Towing Safety Training
- 30: Northwest Area Meeting

### NOVEMBER

- 7: Southwest Trailer and Towing Safety Training
- 8: Area Specialist Meeting

You can find up-to-date information about upcoming events on the Indiana SharePoint site at:

<https://nrsc.sc.egov.usda.gov/central/in/Lists/Calendar/calendar.aspx>